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ashes ; and in the bottom of the crater and all around the margins of the peninsula are masses of shells and gravel, the same as now prevail in the sea around, and exactly similar to those on the raised beaches of India and of Suez.

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*Note by Captain Haines.*—The latitude of the Straits of Babelmandeb I do not think correct. I found soundings all the way across just outside the Red Sea ; greatest depth 198 fathoms.

There are, no doubt, many reefs in existence not yet discovered : I reported one in April last, upon which an Arab ship struck.

The height of the water within the Red Sea depends upon the seasons ; and after strong N.N.W. winds the shoals in the north part are dry in many places : even the shoals in the centre are influenced in the same way. The Durable Shoal can be landed on *at times*.

In January and February it more frequently blows strong from S.S.E. up the sea in the lower part, and the contrary from N.N.W. in June, July, and August.  
—*S. B. H.*

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### VIII.—*Extract of a Letter from Captain Spratt, R.N., on Crete.*

Communicated by Colonel LEAKE, F.R.G.S.

Read March 13, 1854.

I MADE an interesting discovery in the western part of the island, viz., that it has been subject to a series of elevations, amounting to the maximum of 24 feet 6 inches, which occurs near Poekilassos and Suia. In the middle of the island, at Messara, the Fair Havens, and Megalo Kastro, there is none. The eastern end of the island has dipped a little. The upheaving is towards the western end. I had observed it to be about 7 feet in Suda Bay many years ago ; but supposed it to be of a time prior to history, although there was a freshness in the markings which might have induced me to suspect they were of a more recent date. When at Kissamo, I observed that the ancient mole was remarkably high out of the water, and the port almost choked by sand. But the latter is so common an occurrence that it did not open my eyes, although the height of the naked unhewn rocks which formed the mole ought to have done so. On going to Phalasarna I looked for its ancient port, mentioned by Scylax, and in the Stadiasmus as the Emporium ; but I could find no artificial work in the sea. There is, however, a long ledge of rocks, or rather an islet which lies off it, helping to form a natural but not an artificial harbour. This satisfied me in part, till, on examining the ruins, I saw in the plain a square place, enclosed by walls and towers, more massive and solid than those of the city. Pashley describes them without having been sensible of their purpose. I was instantly impressed, for several reasons,

that here was the ancient or artificial port, although full 200 yards from the sea and nearly 20 feet above it. My first idea was, that the ancients had the means of hauling their vessels into it as a dry dock; but at last the coast elevation was remembered, and on measuring the sea marks at its upper level here, I found that the bed of this ancient port is now 3 or 4 feet below that level; so that I had only to imagine the coast again let down 22 feet 6 inches, the amount it has been elevated here and at Grabusa, when the sea would immediately flow into the ancient port, and float any small craft within it. Geologically the recognition of this ancient port has another interest; it establishes the recent origin of this remarkable upheaving of the western end of Crete, which, however, is not surprising, as elsewhere ancient harbours have been lifted into the air, rocks have become islets, and maritime cities or buildings placed many yards from the shore. These facts will enable me to reconcile in some instances the ancient geography with the modern, and thus to verify points otherwise very difficult. For example, Suia is noticed in the Stadiasmus as a town with a *good* port ( $\piόλις \acute{e}τι καὶ λιμένα καλὸν \acute{e}χει$ ), and as following next to Poekilassos, its position is easily recognized. There are so few of the ports of Crete so described in the Stadiasmus, that I naturally looked for a well-sheltered harbour. Pashley says nothing about it, and to look at the locality, few would hope to find a port. A straight and steep shingle beach, off which there is *no anchorage*, stretches across the mouth of the valley of Suia, and beyond the points of the hills on either side. These *points*, however, were sea-cliffs, formerly rising out of the beach, to about the height of 23 feet; and on them the old sea level is shown distinctly by the appearance of the rock, as well as by a line of cylindrical holes, the cells of boring sea-shells, in some of which the shells still remain. Pashley speaks of the town and ruins of Suia as lying on the E. side of the torrent or valley, but takes no notice of the western side, where a little plain within a long ridge of ruined buildings, and nearly 300 yards long and 60 or 70 broad, runs parallel to the shore. This was undoubtedly the tongue of land which sheltered the port lying behind it. The position of the port itself is indicated by a hollow or flat depression of the plain, which depression would even now be overflowed by the sea, if the island was again let down to its old level. Hence it seems evident that this great elevation of the coast must be looked upon as subsequent to the existence of these ancient cities, and subsequent, therefore, to the decline of the Roman Empire.

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